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RUEHSM/USDAO STOCKHOLM SW IMMEDIATE  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRUSSELS 001565

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EEB DORIS HAYWOOD, PM JEFFREY FREDERICK, INR JOHN  
MCGUINESS, S/CT GAIL ROBERTSON

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SUBJECT: EUROPEAN COMMISSION PLANNING SOMALIA MARITIME  
SECURITY INITIATIVE

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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Christopher Murray for reasons 1  
.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: The European Commission's Critical  
Maritime Routes initiative is intended to help improve  
security along key shipping corridors by providing aid to  
countries to enhance vessel tracking and information sharing.  
Initially conceived only for the Malacca Straits, the  
Commission is considering also applying the initiative in

countries in and near the Horn of Africa as part of the international effort to combat piracy. A fact-finding team of experts will visit Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Djibouti in November. The Commission hopes to gain Member State approval of its program in December and launch it next year. Although this project will neither provide a short-term solution to the piracy problem nor attack its root, it shows that as the EU Member States prepare to launch a naval operation to combat piracy, the Commission is pursuing a parallel track aimed at providing long-term support. Post does not have expertise in U.S. maritime security programming, but we believe Commission officials involved in the Critical Maritime Routes initiative would welcome a visit from U.S. experts to coordinate efforts in this vital area. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The European Commission is working to launch a Critical Maritime Routes initiative intended to help improve security along key shipping corridors by providing aid to third countries to enhance vessel tracking and information sharing between ports, Lars-Gunnar Wigemark, Head of the Security Policy Unit in DG RELEX, told PolOff on October 3. Although the specifics of the program remain vague, Wigemark said support could include transponders that would help authorities track small and medium sized vessels, as well as more general capacity building measures. Initially intended for the Malacca Strait, the Commission is now considering applying the initiative off the coast of Somalia as part of the international effort to combat piracy. The proposal

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would provide funding using the ommission's Stability Instrument, which the Commission is currently finalizing for 2009 to 2011.

¶3. (SBU) The Commission sent a team of experts to Indonesia earlier this year on a fact-finding mission and plans to send them to Djibouti, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia in November. They will not visit Somalia due to the security situation. The team includes two former German admirals, a former French admiral, and a Swedish Coast Guard information technology specialist. In addition, the Commission has begun coordinating its initiative within the EU, including with the EU Military Staff, Wigemark said.

¶4. (C) Wigemark conceded that the proposal was nt yet ready to be implemented and would not contribute to a short-term fix to piracy off the Somali coast, nor attack the root of the piracy problem ) a general absence of the rule of law in the region. The information gathered by the team of experts in November will feed into the Indicative Program the Commission intends to present to the EU Member States in December. Assuming it gains Member State approval, Wigemark said the Commission hopes to begin funding the program in ¶2009. Post does not know when the Commission expects to start delivering assistance or when the program would actually have an effect along the high traffic shipping routes leading south from the Suez Canal.

¶5. (C) Comment: This initiative shows that the European Commission and EU Council are working on parallel tracks to provide short- and longer-term support to a region in crisis. Post does not know how deeply the Council and Commission are coordinating their counter-piracy work, but Wigemark,s remarks suggest the two institutions are at least sharing information. European Commission Director for Crisis Platform and Policy Coordination in Common Foreign and Security Policy, Richard Wright, referred to the initiative at the October 8 meeting of EU Political and Security Plus 7

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Ambassadors. He mentioned it in the context of a discussion on EU anti-piracy activities in the Horn of Afirca region. Post does not have expertise in U.S. maritime security

programming, but we believe Commission officials involved in the Critical Maritime Routes initiative would welcome a visit from U.S. experts to coordinate our efforts. Because this is a Commission rather than a Council initiative, U.S. and NATO coordination on this issue would not be subject to limitations on NATO-EU cooperation driven by the Turkey-Cyprus dispute. End Comment.

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